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The 'spy shop'

by Barry Kliff

Considering the nature of its work, Langley, Va., is an unlikely place for the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency. The road that CIA employees use to enter the building is lined on both sides with tall evergreens and looks more like a retreat for harried corporation executives than an intelligence headquarters.

The buildings, which were designed by University graduate Max Abramowitz (who also designed the Assembly Hall), are modern looking and could easily pass for the headquarters of any major industrial concern. To the right of headquarters is a dome-shaped building where CIA officials give lectures and hold briefings for various government and business leaders. Despite the pleasant surroundings there is an air of uneasiness about this structure that lingers after the press officers' cordial welcome.

On the wall before the entrance is a stone which defines the CIA's mission. Once inside, a huge green and white seal with an eagle and the words "Central Intelligence Agency-United States of America" are embedded in the shiny tile floor. There are some pillars inside, but for the most part the building is bright and airy and according to several CIA officials, the place isn't nearly as cloak and dagger as one might imagine.

In order to enter the building, a person must have prior clearance. Visitors are required to wear tags with red and white lines surrounding a duplicate of the CIA seal in the lobby.

CIA employees all wear identification tags and in order to move from one section of the building to the other, they must insert special magnetic cards that will open the gates to authorized users.

It is not the type of place that people, employee or non-employees, wander about just for sight-seeing purposes. In fact, CIA officials once considered opening Langley for public tours but eventually vetoed the idea. "We couldn't show anything that impressive without giving away national security secrets. We took our wives and kids through on a sample tour and most of them became so bored that we couldn't imagine showing it to anyone else," Herbert Heitu, chief public relations officer, said.

There are seven floors in the main building and the vast majority of this space is taken up by offices. Although no tours are given of the offices, they are, according to Heitu, "regular offices." People can decorate them any way they like, he said. "They have some pretty weird posters up around here but most of the stuff is a reminder of foreign countries where they once served."

Also on the seventh floor is the directors' conference room. In a walnut-paneled room, the nine seals of the governmental agencies that comprise this nation's intelligence efforts adorn the walls. Each morning, the nation's top intelligence officials gather in this room to decide who to spy on, what method to use and where to send the results.

Across a huge conference table, foreign governments have risen and fallen, violations by the Russians of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks have been identified, and the developments in the Mideast are regularly appraised. It was also across this table that previous CIA directors and their staff made the illegal decisions which have led to the creation of eight separate congressional oversight committees.

In only one other country have intelligence operations grown to such proportions—the Soviet Union and its KGB. In dollar amounts, the United States spends about \$7 billion annually for the CIA and other governmental intelligence agencies; the Soviet Union spends more than \$10 billion. It is rumored that the KGB has an agent in every country in the world and has so many in America that the FBI has a difficult time keeping track of them. According to its charter, the CIA is not allowed to work on domestic intelligence and therefore the task of foreign agent surveillance falls to the FBI.

"We're entering a new era of intelligence," CIA director Admiral Stanfield Turner said during an interview. "We only used to worry about the Russians but there are 150 other countries that we have to keep track of now. There isn't as much going on in the covert section as before, but it hasn't been abolished. You have to remember that the other countries aren't playing by the same rules." According to Turner, the CIA is coordinating its efforts in four areas.

First, the agency is trying to make its intelligence reports more analytic. Turner explained that it is not enough to know what new weapons or technology foreign powers possess, but rather what they plan to do with it.

Secondly, the CIA will continue to develop new technology in order to combat the more sophisticated gadgetry used in the intelligence game worldwide. At one time, the CIA actually used transmitters implanted in the heel of someone's shoe, but lately these devices have given way to sophisticated satellites, bugs, cameras and spy planes.

Turner also said he hopes to improve the quality of congressional oversight and impress congressmen with the severity of the problems that the United States must deal with.

Finally Turner hopes to open up the agency to the public as much as possible during his tenure at the CIA. "I've been before Congress 45 times and we're trying to declassify as much information as possible. Sometimes there isn't much left when we're done but we're doing our best to satisfy this need."

In order to accomplish these goals the CIA employs an estimated 20,000 people both here and abroad. At Langley alone, they have enough scholars to start a small university and annually receive 37,000 inquiries for 1,100 positions. Besides this vast network of analysts, the CIA also contracts the services of non-governmental concerns to perform special projects.

Last year, the Rand Corporation was hired by the CIA to provide a report on the Soviet intelligence situation. CIA officials said this is not an uncommon occurrence and explained that the person who did the report for the Rand Corporation worked at the CIA on the same project before leaving the government.

"It's a really weird business," Heitu said. "We can't tell people about our successes or failures. If people know about either of these areas, they can guess what we're up to and then we wouldn't be able to do it again. We've been very successful in anti-terrorist activities, but we just can't tell you where or when."

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Heitu also said that despite the images portayed by the motion picture and television industry, the spy business is not all that glamorous. "A lot of the work is done by just reading foreign periodicals and observing what goes on overseas. For people who have developed a specialty, this is an ideal place to work because they can analyze it to their heart's content."

Most CIA analysts are experts in their field and many of the nation's top professors at major colleges and universities have done work at one time or another for the

CIA. The agency is uneasy about the possible repercussions about this relationship because of past abuses but is confident that the current mood on campus is more receptive to the agency now.

"Some professors have a real block against working for us, but we try to make it as easy as possible," Heitu said. "They have the finest research facilities in the world here and we want them to take advantage of it." Heitu explained that most colleges and universities follow a certain predetermined policy when allowing their professors to do CIA research and the agency tries to work within that framework.

Both Heitu and Turner said the CIA will be a different operation in 10 or 15 years. Already, cost-cutting measures are in effect and Turner was severely criticized for firing over 820 officers from the agency's clandestine operations staff. This lead to severe moral problems which CIA officials admit are just starting to go away.

Further changes are also in store for the way information is gathered. The new technological devices are not replacing but are putting new demands on human intelligence gathering (*HUMINT* in agency terms). The signal information (*SIGNIT*) and communication information (*COMINT*) functions are now so advanced that pictures can be taken of a herd of cattle from 50 miles above the earth and photo-analysts can tell the particular breed.

Aside from the changes in gathering and analyzing intelligence, the CIA will be operating under closer security than ever before. "Everybody is watching us now," Heitu said. "I'm not saying that things couldn't go wrong like they did in the past but it would be pretty damn difficult. We're in as much of a fishbowl as an intelligence agency can be."